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## DECLARATION OF YUSEF J. ABDUL-ALIM

I, YUSEF J. ABDUL-ALIM, hereby declare:

1. I make this declaration based on my own personal knowledge, and if called to testify I could and would do so competently as follows:

2. I teach sixth grade science at Lynwood Middle School in Lynwood, California. I teach as part of the Teach For America program, and this is my first year teaching.

3. I only have one class set of books for all my five classes to share. That means I have one book for every five students, and no student can take a book home for homework. I have to photocopy pages from the book to give the kids homework.

4. Photocopied pages are not equal substitutes for books the students could take home every night. Science is concept work, not rote work, so students need an immediate resource in front of them to help them struggle through the ideas they're learning. Without a book, the students have nothing to fall back on if they don't understand something or if they find a problem in their homework. I'd like to be able to tell the students to read a chapter and underline all the words and concepts they have trouble with. Then they could begin to own the words and the language and the ideas in the books, and they could refer back to the ideas about which they had questions later. But there is no point in asking them to underline what they read in class and then to erase it before the next class comes in.

5. Even if the students could learn science as well with photocopied packets as they could with books, I don't have enough paper to photocopy the books for students' homework every night. The school only assigns me one ream of paper each week to use for all my classes. If I have to run a two-page glossary off to give to all 200 of my students, then I have to use about half a ream of paper just for that one assignment. Then for the rest of the week, I have only one other two-page assignment I can give for homework, so some days kids have to go without any homework at all because we don't have enough books or paper. Once, I had a six-page assignment to give my students and I literally had to steal two extra reams of paper from the school supplies to be able to copy all the pages for the kids. I had one ream in my coat, one ream in my waistband, and the one ream I was assigned to have in my hand. I shouldn't have to be stealing or begging to get basic

1 supplies so I can assign homework to my students. And my students shouldn't have to go without  
2 learning because the school doesn't have books or paper for all of them.

3       6.       We also have difficulty doing class work with only one set of books for five classes.  
4 Every student is different, so not every student does the same quantity or quality of work in the same  
5 50 minutes of class time. One student might be a slow reader and another student might write  
6 slowly, and still another student might need to think while reading. And some students' command  
7 of English is less developed than others', so some students need more time to take in the context of  
8 their lessons. Because the students are working at different paces, some students are bored and  
9 restless while other students are still working. Not having books for the students to take home means  
10 I don't have the option of saying a class assignment becomes homework because we didn't finish  
11 the particular assignment during class time. I have to continue with a particular assignment in class  
12 even though some students have finished their work on the assignment while other students are  
13 reading or writing or trying to understand.

14       7.       I fear what message we send children when we don't provide books for them. It's  
15 not a secret to the kids that the State of California provides their education. How can we expect  
16 them to have an interest in and relationship with the school system itself if they do not have basic  
17 tools to use to learn? One goal of schooling is to teach socialization, and the socialization lessons  
18 my students learn is a dangerous one.

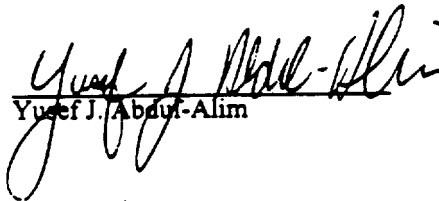
19       8.       We have a high percentage of uncredentialed teachers at Lynwood Middle School.  
20 I can see the negative effects on children of having uncredentialed teachers because I don't have my  
21 credential myself. For teachers without credentials, everything is theoretical still because we have  
22 no practical experience. We have never had lesson plans bomb, for example, so we don't know how  
23 to pick up the pieces the first time it happens to us. But teachers with credentials have been required  
24 to put in a certain number of hours student teaching before getting their credentials, so they have  
25 experience to draw from when they are in classrooms later.

26       9.       All of my classes have had more students than the legal class size limit all year long.  
27 In one class I have 41 students and in another class I have 38 students, but the limit is supposed to  
28 be 35 or 36 students. My class sizes are so large that I can't identify who the problem readers are.

1 I didn't find out that a couple of my students could not read until after the first quarter. I had failed  
2 them and so we sat down with their parents to talk about what was going on, and the kids broke  
3 down crying and saying they couldn't read. And now that I know these kids can't read, I still don't  
4 have time in class to work with the slow students because I have too many kids in the room, all of  
5 whom have needs. I now stay for an extra hour and 15 minutes after school every day to provide a  
6 space in my classroom where kids can come to do homework or talk about problems or get extra  
7 help. So I try to reach some of the kids that way. But I shouldn't have to provide an after-school  
8 program to be able to reach the kids I teach.

9 10. The school is so overcrowded that we serve lunch in three different shifts. The sixth  
10 graders go to lunch at 10:20 in the morning. That makes no sense—who is ready for lunch at 10:20  
11 AM? In prison they feed people at noon.

12 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing  
13 is true and correct. Executed on April 24, 2000 at Lynwood, California.

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16 Yusuf J. Abdul-Alim  
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